

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOUTH TYNE AND WEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP JOINT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, 18 March 2016

PRESENT: Councillor M Mordey in the Chair (Vice Chair Sunderland Council)

Gateshead Council Councillor G Haley

Sunderland Council Councillor G Miller

South Tyneside Council Councillor J Foreman and Councillor A West

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gateshead Council Tony Alder, Fiona Swinburne, Gary Smith, Chris Wilson, Colin Huntington and Rosalyn Patterson

Sunderland Council Les Clark, Mark Speed and Colin Curtis

South Tyneside Council R Cummins

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Green, Cllr Gannon and Martin Harrison.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2015 were agreed as a correct record. As the meeting was inquorate, the following actions were agreed by the Committee:-

Contracts Update

- That the progress of the project was noted.

Visitor and Education Centre One Year Anniversary Event

- That the progress of the project was noted.

Unite and GMB Issues with SITA

- That the Committee noted the contents of the report and the response and actions undertaken by SITA.

- That the Committee agreed to receive further updates if alternative action is undertaken by the trade unions.

Communications Update

- That the Committee agreed to receive further updates around the possibility of making representations to Government about counting IBA in recycling figures.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

4 CONTRACTS UPDATE

The Committee received a report on the current position regarding the Residual Waste Treatment Contract and other contracts and activities managed by the Partnership.

It was reported that an update from South Tyne and Wear Energy Recovery Ltd on the proposed 2014/15 reconciliation payment is currently being awaited. By the end of January 2016 just over 162,093 tonnes of contract waste has been managed, 155,085 tonnes of this waste was delivered to the EfW facility. There has been 97.14% availability and 100% landfill diversion rate, the turbine has achieved 99.93% availability. Recycling performance is 3.1% however this figure is currently being verified. Annual shutdown was staggered so waste continued to be delivered to the EfW facility and no landfill arrangements were therefore required.

Stakeholder engagement continues at the Visitor and Education Centre and between April 2015 and January 2016, over 1,900 children participated in events at the Centre and in the partnership area. Sunderland College design students are again working on a project using recycled materials, various displays of their work will be seen at venues across the partnership area.

In terms of the MRF contracts it was reported that the comingled tonnage has increased since 2014/15, however the paper tonnage has decreased due to the use of tablets for example. Work is ongoing with Palm Recycling over contamination issues.

It was noted that the joint partnership team continues to work to develop and improve communications around HWRC usage.

It was queried whether there is evidence of reduced packaging. It was confirmed that the industry is working on reducing packaging, and there is less newspaper waste, however with an increase in online purchases this has led to an increase in cardboard waste.

Following a query at the last meeting it was reported that Defra has confirmed that energy produced by EfW facilities contributes between 3% and 5% of the total energy produced nationally.

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee noted the progress of the project.

5 ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITY - INCINERATOR BOTTOM ASH

The Joint Executive Committee received a report on the impact of reclassification of Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA). Under the joint strategy the partnership aims to achieve 50% recycling target by 2020.

IBA is a by-product from the incineration of waste and contains materials such as metals, which is extracted for reprocessing, the remaining IBA is used by the construction sector as a replacement for quarried stone. Although IBA is recycled it is classified as 'material recovery' and not 'material recycling'. However there is ambiguity within the EU regarding its classification as some countries include it in calculation of their recycling performance.

As a result of this the Joint Executive Committee agreed to write to Rory Stewart MP to highlight the categorisation of IBA and the impact on recycling performance. If IBA was categorised as recycling performance would increase by 11% for Gateshead, 10.8% for South Tyneside and 11.4% for Sunderland. This would get the partnership closer to the 50% target. It was confirmed that no response to the letter has been received but media reports state that local authority pressure has encouraged Defra to change its stance.

The Committee was disappointed that no response had been received since January 2016 and suggested that a further letter be sent.

RESOLVED -

- (i) That the Joint Executive Committee noted the contents of the report.
- (ii) That the Joint Executive Committee agreed to receive further updates regarding the reclassification of IBA as appropriate.
- (iii) That a further letter be sent to Defra from the Joint Executive Committee.

6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHRONICLE AWARDS

The Committee watched a film presentation prepared by the partnership's to support the submission for Service Delivery Model for Delivery award at the Local Government Chronicle Awards. The awards were held on 16th March and unfortunately the partnership did not win, however it was noted that it was a great achievement to be shortlisted and feedback from the judging panel was excellent.

RESOLVED - That the Joint Executive Committee noted the information presented.

7 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

A presentation was given to the Committee on the ongoing communications work and national stories that have been in the media.

It was reported that almost 30,000 tonnes of water damaged household goods has been disposed in landfill sites following storms Desmond and Frank. The Environment Agency has advised that such materials cannot be recycled as they are classified as being 'contaminated'. It is estimated that this has cost local authorities of £2.25M in landfill taxes and the Local Government Association has suggested this should be given back to the Councils to support local jobs and growth. It was noted that if this had occurred in the partnership area, the waste would be processed through the EfW facility and not incur landfill tax.

An incident occurred in Hartlepool where a mother of three was left injured after a confrontation with three men claiming to be from a waste management company. Police believe this is an organised gang who have been involved in a number of incidents in the area.

Rory Stewart MP has welcomed discussions with the industry in drawing up policies around waste and recycling. However, the CIWM has criticised Defra's new departmental plan and the Resource Association has claimed there is a lack of transparency from Defra.

Concerns have been raised about the new Fire Prevention Plan (FPP) guidance, in particular the wood sector around the storage restrictions that are being proposed.

It was reported that the introduction of the five pence plastic bag levy has been blamed for the closure of a packaging company. The company said that this was due to the new legislation and its impact on customer and retail demand as well as 'aggressive overseas competition'.

Conwy Council has moved away from plans to go to a four weekly residual waste kerbside collection service and instead has agreed to change to three weekly collection, which would save £213,000 per year. There has been a media reaction to this story with some claiming it makes a 'mockery of paying council tax'. However, it was noted that Conwy's weekly collections of food waste and dry recyclables will continue.

It was also noted that Lancashire County Council has asked their arms length waste management company to make significant savings for 2016/17, which could lead to 250 job losses. The proposals related to the residual waste collection service and some community education activities, although it has been reported that there will be no changes in household dry recycling collections.

Campground Community Liaison Group met on 15 March, due to the situation with GVOC Ian Blake has resigned as Chair and it was agreed that the role of chair would be shared in the future. The Group received a presentation about the Tesco 'Bags of Help' scheme which is a fund for local community projects using income generated through the plastic bag levy, and received an operations update. The next meeting will be held on 12 July. The next meeting for the Jack Crawford House Community Liaison Group will be held on 7 April, no meeting has been held since the last Joint Executive Committee.

RESOLVED -

That the Joint Executive Committee noted the information presented.

8 DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS (TO BE AGREED)

RESOLVED -

That the Joint Executive Committee agreed to the future meeting dates;

- 24 June 2016 – 1.30pm
- 23 September 2016 – 1.30pm
- 9 December 2016 – 1.30pm
- 17 March 2017 – 1.30pm